

### CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (currently amended) An apparatus, A Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network interface, comprising:

a first network interface coupled to service packetized communications that communicates with at least one Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) VoIP terminal within a first network; to service packetized communications;

a second backbone network interface communicatively coupled to the network interface to service the packetized communications via a second network; and

a processor processing unit communicatively coupled to the first network interface and to the second backbone network interface; and

a programmable codec, coupled to the processor, that employs a corresponding coding scheme to encode or decode each of the packetized communications; and wherein:

whereby the processor processing unit determines a communication signature for each of the packetized communications; and

whereby the processor processing unit determines, based upon a corresponding communication signature, whether a packetized communication is a real-time communication;

when the packetized communication is the real-time communication, the processor monitors a service level at which the real-time communication is currently supported within at least one of the first network and the second network; and

when the service level is below a minimal service level, the programmable codec changes a coding scheme by which the real-time communication is encoded or decoded therein.

2. (currently amended) The apparatus VoIP network interface of Claim 1, whereby the processor directs the network interface and the backbone interface to provide a minimal service level to the real-time communication wherein:

the programmable codec employs a first coding scheme to encode or decode a first packetized communication of the packetized communications; and

the programmable codec employs a second coding scheme to encode or decode a second packetized communication of the packetized communications.

3. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 1, 2, wherein:

the processor determines, based upon a corresponding communication signature, whether a packetized communication is a non real-time communication; and

in providing ~~the~~ a minimal service level to the real time communication, when a non real-time communication is ~~communications~~ are identified, its and their service level is adjusted ~~levels are reduced~~ to be relatively lower than a service level of the real-time communication.

4. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 1, 2, wherein:

the second network includes a first servicing network and a second servicing network; and

if ~~a~~ the service level at which the real-time communication may be supported when communicated via the first servicing network is below the minimal ~~minimum~~ service level, to the real-time communication cannot be met, the processor that the real-time communication is ~~be~~ rerouted via the second ~~another~~ servicing network.

5. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 1, wherein the processor prioritizes the real-time communication over non real-time communication ~~communications~~.

6. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 1, wherein each packetized communication has associated therewith a pair of communication signatures that includes ~~signatures~~, a receive signature corresponding to communications received from a corresponding VoIP terminal via the first network interface and a transmit signature corresponding to communications received via the second network ~~backbone~~ interface and intended for the corresponding VoIP terminal.

7. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 6, wherein ~~whereby~~ the receive signature is primarily employed to determine whether the packetized communication is the ~~a~~ real-time communication.

8. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 6, wherein the receive signature indicates a problem with the apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~.

9. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 6, wherein the transmit signature indicates a problem with communications within the second network ~~other links of communication path~~.

10. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 1, wherein the ~~real-time~~ packetized communication is an audio communication.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of Claim 1, wherein the packetized communication ~~communications~~ is an audio-visual ~~audiovisual~~ communication.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus ~~VoIP network interface~~ of claim 11, wherein the audio-visual ~~audiovisual~~ communication is a video conferencing communication.

13-48. (canceled).